

THE LEISURE HOUR.

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION.

"BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,—AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND."—*Couper.*



IN THE GAMBLING-HOUSE AT MILAN.

HURLOCK CHASE.

BY G. E. SARGENT, AUTHOR OF "STORY OF A CITY ARAB."

CHAPTER XIX.—THE SISTERS' STORY, CONCLUDED.

"I HAVE told you, Harry," said Prissy Fleming, when Mr. Crickett had withdrawn, and her sister, her nephew, and herself, were once more seated round the fire, "I have told you of our first coming to the Priory. We were very young to have such a charge put upon us, but we did not feel the burden. Our hearts were so light, Harry, at having escaped from the constant pressure of poverty—gentle poverty, too—that I am afraid we did not feel so deeply as we ought to have felt the

recent bereavement we had experienced. There is this to be said in our excuse, that our poor father had been so soured by his troubles—but I will not speak of this. I shall only say, that if we mourned his death too little, and were too light-hearted and happy in our new circumstances, retribution was not long delayed.

"Well, Harry, we took possession of the Priory; and, as our brother absented himself, we had the credit with our neighbours of being the sole owners of the estate. We did not set about to rectify the mistake. Perhaps we were elated with the consequence we thus obtained: it was natural we should be, I suppose.

"We soon became rather popular, Harry. And this also, I suppose, was natural. Visitors called upon us; invitations poured in. But you have heard something of this, I dare say."

"Oh yes, aunt Prissy," said Harry, with a smile; "you were quite the rage—popular idols, shall I say? You were spoken of as the fair nuns of the Priory, and much more to the same purpose. All this I have heard; and I do not wonder at it."

"There was a great deal of nonsense spoken, I have no doubt," said Prissy; "and enough came to our ears to please our vanity. At least, I can answer for myself; and I dare say all our heads were a little turned with the adulation we received; and we behaved accordingly."

"There were gay doings at this old place, Harry, that is the truth of it, and a great deal of vanity and folly. We held our levees; we had our parties, to which our neighbours, for many miles around, were invited and came. We had a sufficient command of money to sustain this life of frivolity; for our separate portions of our father's personal property—the money legacy I spoke of—gave us this power, independently of our annuities. Besides this, our brother, poor Vincent, would not hear of receiving any rent for the Priory; for, with all his wildness, he was generous. So we spent money very fast, and very foolishly. We had our riding-horses, and our grooms, and our maids. We lavished large sums on dress. If you were a young lady, Harry, I could show you—"

"What signifies speaking so much of these things, my dear?" asked Miss Fleming, for the first time breaking her self-imposed silence.

"Very little indeed, sister; only that it is best for our nephew to know all our weaknesses. But I will pass on to another part of our story. I told you, Harry, of a young collegian whom we met with our brother one evening at Oxford, as we were walking by the riverside. That young collegian was your own father."

Henry Rivers' countenance betrayed his surprise. "I never knew that my father was at college," he said.

"He was at college," returned Prissy, calmly; "but I do not wonder you never heard of it. He was always reserved towards you, Harry, you yourself acknowledge."

"He was exceedingly uncommunicative, aunt—unhappily for me, or I might have been better prepared for my present troubles," said Harry, with deep emotion.

"True, true; and oh, Harry!" exclaimed Prissy, "I can never think—we can never think, dear Molly and I—of those troubles, without a deep feeling of sorrow that if your poor father had never known our brother, things would never have happened as they have done. It is written that 'one sinner destroyeth much good,' and it is no small part almost of our self-reproach, that your ruin, dear Henry, is to be traced to our own brother."

"Don't talk of my ruin, aunt Prissy," said Henry Rivers, more cheerfully than he had yet spoken since his return from Fairbourne Court. "I am not poorer now than many a more worthy fellow than I, nor so poor as many a one besides. I am young, I have hands to labour, health, strength, determination, and, I hope, a blunt sort of intellect which may serve my purpose. I hope, too, that I am indifferently honest; and I know that, as yet, I have done nothing to make me ashamed of my altered circumstances. Somehow or other I shall get through the world, I think; and if I have betrayed a little weakness to-day, aunt, I am not going to sit down all my life hereafter to cry over a broken toy. You must not talk of my being ruined till I have done something to make you ashamed of me. Then indeed—"

"You are right, Harry," interposed Miss Fleming, warmly, as she lifted her eyes and fastened them with admiring affection on her nephew's animated countenance. "And I do not know why we should insult you with our womanish pity. Only be true to yourself, and you need not be concerned at what the world may say of you. No man can be said to be ruined who is not self-destroyed by folly and vice. Ah, Harry," she added with a sigh, "there is no ruin like that! and the arrows which pierce deepest into the soul, and rankle the most painfully there, are those which are pointed and feathered with our own sins."

"And, next to that, with the sins of those we best have loved, Harry," added Prissy, re-echoing her sister's sigh.

"But, aunt," resumed the young man, "you spoke of my father's misfortunes as having been traceable to your own—that is, to my uncle Vincent. I do not see how this can be; for surely very many years must have elapsed since they met."

"It is more than a quarter of a century since our brother left England; and his name is almost forgotten by his old companions, I dare say. Yet it is not the less true that he inflicted deep and lasting injury on your father, and on you, through him. Your father, when we first knew him, was exceedingly simple, and as ignorant of the ways of the world as a very child. You will not mind my saying that he was also bashful, even to awkwardness. I remember, though I was but a girl then, that on being first introduced to him, as we have told you, this awkwardness caused us all great amusement; and Bessy—your mother, Harry—especially made game of him after our return home. She little thought, then, that she would ever be his wife."

"I am not sure," continued the lady, after a thoughtful pause, "that it is wise in parents to keep their children, their sons, at any rate, in such extreme ignorance of the ways of the world. I don't mean that they should be introduced to these ways; but, as to be forewarned is to be forearmed, I think, if I were a father, I would tell my son of some of the traps and pitfalls which abound in the ordinary paths of life. When you are a father, Harry—"

"My dear aunt Prissy," Harry began, with a deprecating gesture.

"You shake your head, Harry, as though, after to-day's terrible experiences, such a thing is not once to be thought of. But you will yet get over this trouble, my dear, and when you are a father, should you ever be one, you will think, perhaps, of an old maid's advice, and let your son have the benefit of your experience, without its drawbacks."

"I will not forget, aunt Prissy; but—"

"But you do not see what that has to do with my story. I will tell you. Your father, Harry, was so ignorant and simple that he became an easy prey to temptation; and he was so infatuated, that when he began to sip the intoxicating cup of forbidden pleasures, he was not satisfied till he had drained it to the dregs. Do I pain you by saying this?"

"You do not offend me, aunt. I am sorry to hear it, and surprised as well; but since it is so, it does me no harm to know it."

"It is necessary that you should know it, or I would not have told you. And think, dear Harry," added aunt Prissy, with a sigh, "that while I am laying bare your father's weakness, I am exposing our brother's wickedness."

"I think I understand you, aunt. It was my uncle Vincent who was my father's tempter."

"He was; that is, he was one of them. There were others as well, who were ready enough to step in with their assistance; but I am afraid that Vincent began the evil work. Poor Vincent!"

"I must interrupt you, sister, for one moment, only to say a few words," said Miss Fleming, once more interposing. "It is true, Harry, that your father was simple, and so became an easy prey to temptation; and what Prissy says is no doubt true, that if he had been forewarned of the snares of life, he might have been better armed against them. But this is only part of the truth; another part of it is, that with all the pains which had been taken to keep him ignorant of the evil, no care had been bestowed in cultivating the good. 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,' Harry; and no one had ever thought of teaching him this. Pardon me, Prissy, for interrupting you."

"Quite right, my dear," said the younger sister; "and now, Harry, I think almost enough has been said on this subject; and I shall only add, that whatever our poor brother and your father might be and were to each other, the knowledge came to us afterwards and by degrees, to add to the great sorrow of our lives. And now," continued Prissy, "I am really coming to that great sorrow.

"We had been living here, at the Priory, three years; and not many changes had taken place, only that we were growing older. We were as gay and thoughtless as ever; and we were looking forward to the time of dear Melly's being married; for Al—I mean the person—"

"Say Alfred, sister. Why should I shrink from hearing the name?" Melly whispered.

"No, my dear, there is no reason if you do not mind. Alfred, then, had finished his college terms, and was eager to settle in life. But he was not rich; and he wanted to improve his position. So, when an offer was made to him of going abroad for a year, as companion to a young baronet with whose family he was acquainted, and who had both the power and the will to promote his future interests, he consented; and the marriage was put off. Melly, dear sister, are you sure you can bear it?" asked Prissy, suddenly breaking off as she came to this part of the story.

"I will bear it, my dear. Go on, Prissy," said Miss Fleming, firmly.

"The marriage was put off, therefore, Harry, though the wedding dresses were being provided; and Alfred went abroad, after coming to the Priory to take leave of Melly. I should have told you before, that in the three years which had passed, Alfred had paid us several short visits, and so had our brother; but they never came in company, and, from a few words spoken on these occasions, we found that they had never become intimate with each other in Oxford. We did not think this strange, and we were rather glad than sorry that it was so; for we judged too correctly that Vincent would have been an unsafe companion for any young man. It is sad to have to say this of a brother, but it is true.

"Well, Harry, not many weeks after Alfred's departure, our brother came in a hasty, sudden sort of way to the Priory. Your father was with him; he had just succeeded, and very unexpectedly, to the Hurlock estate; and this was the first time we had seen him since that first meeting of which I have told you. Both he and Vincent were in high spirits on account of your father's good fortune; but they remained with us only one night; the next morning they rode over to the Chase, and we saw nothing of them for several days. Then they paid us another short visit.

"So your precious darling is gone to Italy, is he, Melly?" said Vincent, with a pleasant laugh, as we were seated at the supper-table that evening. And Melly answered, yes, he was.

"There is a chance of our seeing him before you, then," returned Vincent; "for Rivers and I are going off to the Continent next week."

"We were very much surprised to hear this; and we said so, all of us.

"Why should not we see a little of the world, as well as other people?" Vincent asked; and your father explained that he had found some months would elapse before he could take possession of 'The Hurlocks'; that meanwhile his presence would not be needed; and that, having plenty of money at his command, for the first time in his life, he was determined to enjoy his new-found liberty; 'and as your brother is good enough to offer to help me spend my money, I don't know what better thing I can do; do you, Miss Fleming?' he added.

"My brother has no need to help you spend your money, I think," Melly began to say; but she did not finish.

"You think I can spend it fast enough without his help, I suppose," said your father, laughing lightly.

"I hope he has enough of his own, without being obliged to spend his friend's money," Melly said, rather offended with your father's tone and manner. To tell the truth, she had taken rather a strong prejudice against your father, even at that time. Had you not, sister?"

"Had I cause? But go on, Prissy," replied Melly, with an effort.

"Well, Harry, your father laughed again when Melly said that; and Vincent turned away the talk about money by asking questions as to where Alfred and his fellow-traveller were at that time, and the route they were likely to take in their tour. We told him. There seemed no good reason why he should not have this information; for though, as I have said, we were not sorry that their acquaintance had been slight in Oxford, we did not wish to keep Vincent and Alfred perpetually apart from each other. In truth, in spite of his faults, we still loved our brother very dearly; and we thought that, if they should meet abroad, Alfred's good sense and steady principles might secure a beneficial influence over our poor brother.

"I need not repeat, even if I could remember, all that passed on that evening, or during the remainder of our brother's visit; so I will pass on, and say that on the following day he and your father departed; and a few days afterwards came a short letter to say that they had embarked for France, and that their intention was to remain in Paris a few days, then to go on to Switzerland, after that to enter Italy, and seek out Alfred and his friend."

Arrived at this part of her story, Prissy suddenly ceased speaking, and, leaving her seat, walked slowly across the room to a secretary book-case, which she opened; and then she presently returned with a small packet in her hand. It was tied round with black ribbon; this she loosened with a trembling hand. Then she resumed her narrative.

"Three or four months passed away, Harry, and we heard nothing from our brother; which, however, did not surprise us, as he had always been a very negligent correspondent. But dear Melly had two or three letters during that time from Alfred; and we knew from these, that down to the last date of his writing he had not met with our brother. And now read this, Harry," continued Prissy, putting a piece of a newspaper, yellow

with age, into her nephew's hand. "It will save me the pain of telling, and Melly of hearing, what it contains."

Harry glanced at the paper. There was no need for his aunt to direct his eye to the part she wished him to read; for broad, black lines of ink enframed the following paragraph:—

"A ship that left Genoa on the 12th of November brings an account of a lamentable occurrence which took place at Milan, about a fortnight before, in which several English gentlemen who had been staying in that city were concerned. The writer of the letter does not give the names of these persons, but states only that they were in a notorious gambling-house, when a quarrel arose between them, which rose to so great a height that swords were drawn; and before the spectators could interfere, two of the Englishmen were mortally wounded, and died before morning. In the confusion which ensued their assailants were urged to escape; but they preferred to give themselves up to the authorities, and are now awaiting their trial. It is rumoured that one of the unfortunately slain gentlemen was a nobleman of large property; and it is further supposed that it will go hard with the assailants, whose rashness cannot be too greatly condemned, and who also, as report goes, gave the first provocation."

Harry read the paragraph silently. He re-read it, for the first reading had bewildered his mind; and as he read, big drops of perspiration burst out upon his forehead, and the blood, which for a moment had stopped in its free current, rushed through his arteries again with accelerated force, and swelled his veins. He gave back the paper to his aunt.

"I think I can understand, partly understand, now, aunt," he said, in a low, mournful tone; "but why have I been told this?"

"We did not understand it at first, Harry," aunt Prissy resumed. "That is, when we read this, it did not at all come to our thoughts what a deep personal interest we had in the terrible news. We did not know that Alfred and his friend were at Milan, or had any intention of going there. The last letter from him was dated from Lecco; and he said in it that his friend was so enraptured with the beautiful lake of Como, that he talked of taking a villa on its banks for the winter. Why, therefore, should we have thought of him in connection with anything that had taken place at Milan? And then, the last place on earth in which Alfred was likely to be seen was a gambling-house—a hell, Harry. No, we did not understand it as you do; and we laid the newspaper aside without another thought about the poor murdered men at Milan."

A deep convulsive sob from the elder sister interrupted Prissy here, but the next moment it was stifled. "Go on, sister: there is not much more to tell Harry now," she said. Prissy cast a compassionate glance at her sister, and obeyed.

"Here is another strip of paper for you to read, Harry," she said. "It is a month later, you see, than the other; and we read this too, in our weekly paper, without understanding it. It was among the foreign news." Harry took the paper and read. He would gladly have hastened the story to the inevitable end, and dispensed with any further details; but he had no power to say so. The second newspaper scrap read thus:—

"The two Englishmen who gave themselves up to the authorities at Milan, for the fatal brawl in a gaming-house, have been brought to trial; but, owing either to a want of clear evidence, or to a failure in justice, or, as some have affirmed, to secret bribery of the judges, they are acquitted, and have left the city."

Harry gave back this paper also, silently. He was too oppressed to speak.

"It was only the day after we saw this in the paper that a letter came. It was brought to us by William Crickett."

"Your present servant, aunt?" Harry compelled himself to ask. He seemed to be expected to say something.

"Our present servant, Harry. He was a young man then. We had known him as a lad in Oxford years before, as the son of a college scout. He was a handy, sharp lad, and our brother had taken him under his protection. We knew also that Vincent had spoken of taking Crickett abroad with him as his servant. We were a good deal alarmed, therefore, when he so unexpectedly made his appearance at the Priory, especially when we saw how agitated he was at first seeing us, and told us how fast he had been travelling by land and sea, since he left our brother. And then he gave us this letter. Take it, Harry, and read it."

Harry was very docile; he took the letter. It had been preserved with care, that was evident; but time had darkened the fair white paper, and dimmed and faded the once black characters thereon inscribed. It was written on all sides; and, like the prophet's scroll, therein were written "lamentations, and mourning, and woe," with a trembling, passionate, hurried hand. The writer was Vincent Fleming.

Harry glanced at its contents. It was full of remorse; and the writer heaped terrible imprecations on his own head as a murderer, and for the misery and wretchedness he had brought upon his sisters, especially upon Melly. It told how he had sought for Alfred and his friend, and had found them domiciled in a cottage on the banks of the lake, and had induced them to return with him to Milan. That there he had used his "devilish art" in drawing the young baronet into a vortex of dissipation, and had succeeded, in spite of the strong remonstrances of his "better angel," Alfred. That a quarrel ensued, and then a temporary separation, the young baronet declaring that he would no longer remain under the surveillance of a milksop, who grudged him the pleasures which lay within his grasp. That, having thus "obtained possession of the weak fool," he (Vincent), in conjunction with his own friend Rivers, had gained a complete ascendancy over the infatuated young baronet, and introduced him into further scenes of mad and vicious pleasure, which turned his foolish brain. That, meanwhile, the young man's guide and monitor and friend, Alfred, watched his opportunity for detaching him from these new companionships and pursuits, and followed him from place to place for this purpose without success. That, on one fatal evening, the writer, with Rivers and the young baronet, entered one of the vilest and most notorious gambling-houses in Milan, where they played for high stakes, and drank so deeply that their senses were drowned. That the young baronet, who had lost very heavily, in the madness of intoxication turned upon himself (Vincent) and Rivers, accusing them of unfair play. That a desperate quarrel was the consequence, in which swords were drawn and threats of vengeance uttered on all sides, when, at this juncture, Alfred, who had obtained knowledge of this infamous resort, entered the room accompanied by a *sbirro*, or secret police-officer, whose assistance he had obtained, for the purpose of detaching the young man, for whose conduct he was responsible, from his destroyers, if need be by force. That the confusion and uproar were by this intrusion increased threefold. That lights were extinguished, tables overthrown, and more swords drawn,

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amidst the shrieks and curses of the combatants. And that, finally, when order was in some measure restored, and fresh lights introduced, it was found that Alfred (who was not even armed, and had taken no part in the conflict, save in endeavouring to cover the body of his friend) and the young baronet were pierced through with many wounds, and lying in the agonies of death.

Thus far Vincent's letter was coherent. It seemed as though he had put strong constraint upon himself to be the teller of his own sin and shame. But, having done this, he had evidently given himself up again to strong compunctions, and broke out again into bitter self-reproaches.

Finally, he bade his sisters farewell for ever. He should never return to England, he wrote; for, though acquitted by human laws, the brand of Cain was upon him; he was a murderer, doomed to wander "a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth." How could he return to witness the devastation he had made—the wretchedness he had caused? It would be useless for his sisters to strive to learn tidings of him. He should change his name, and to them, whatever might betide him, he should evermore be dead.

"You need tell me no more, dear aunt; be spared the pain of any further explanations: I see it all now," said Henry Rivers, in broken sentences, as he gave back the imperfectly read letter into Prissy's hand.

"There is not much more to tell, Harry," she said. "If I were to try, I could not describe the effect produced upon us all by that fearful letter. Let that pass, therefore. I have told you what we were before that sudden blow was struck; you have seen what we have been since; you know what we are now. But do you desire to know nothing more?"

"Yes, aunt; you have spoken of your brother, of my uncle Vincent, as still living, and of his possible return. You know something of his after-history, therefore, and of his present retreat?"

Prissy shook her head mournfully. "We have never heard of him since, Harry; and yet, oh how earnestly we have wished for it, and prayed for it, if so it might be! No," she repeated, "we have never heard of poor Vincent. As soon as we had recovered (for God was merciful to us all, and especially to dear Melly), as soon as we had a little recovered from the dreadful shock, we took measures for finding out where poor Vincent was. We employed agents abroad, through our lawyer in London, who entered very heartily into our anxieties (may he be rewarded for all his kindness), but it was in vain. No, Harry, since that dreadful letter was put into our hands, we never heard more of poor Vincent."

"But my father; surely—"

"I will tell you of your father, Harry. Six months after we received that letter he returned to 'The Hurlocks.' By that time the repairs he had ordered were finished, and the house was prepared for his reception. He was changed, very much changed, Harry."

"Spare my father's memory, aunt, as far as you can," said the young man. "I know that his marriage with my poor mother was distasteful to you, dear aunts; and I know now that it must have been distressing. Please to pass over that: I do not want to know how he could have prevailed on your sister to become his wife after that—that event of which you have been speaking. But did he bring no tidings of your brother?"

"None, Harry. After their acquittal, Vincent had suddenly disappeared from the house where they had occupied apartments together; and all your father's researches had failed to discover the place of his retreat."

"You are sure that he—my uncle—did not return to Oxford, aunt Prissy?"

"We are sure of this. Think, Harry, how well he was known there."

"True; and yet you believe he still lives?"

"We do believe this. Do not shake our faith in this, and so add new sorrow to our abiding grief, Harry," said the lady, passionately. "The hope has been our companion so long, that we dread to lose it, frail as it is," she added.

"It shall not be lost through me, dear aunt," said Harry, gently; "and now I think I can understand why you have told me this history. But the world is very wide, aunt Prissy; and even if—though there are millions of chances against it, almost as many chances as there are people in the world—but even if I should meet with the poor wanderer, eat at the same table and drink from the same cup, we might meet and part unknown to each other; his name——"

"You will retain yours, Harry," said his aunt, hurriedly; "and it may be that Providence will be so good—yes, it may be, Harry."

They sat in silence for a little time, while Prissy busied herself nervously in re-tying the black ribbon round the preserved papers. Then Harry spoke again.

"I have only one more question to ask, aunt. I am curious to know how and why Crickett came to be your servant."

"He offered it himself. He pledged himself to silence respecting all that had gone before; and it was a comfort to us, when we reduced our establishment, to have some one near us who could understand the cause of our sorrow, and yet be silent. Besides, he seemed to be a kind of connecting-link between Vincent and ourselves; and we had a hope—a faint hope—that by his means, in some way, our brother might be recovered. This hope has failed; but William Crickett has been faithful to his promise. You don't like William, I know, Harry; but——"

"I have never said that I do not like him, aunt."

"No; but he knows it. He has been telling us so, only to-day."

"Perhaps he is right," said Harry; "but I shall like him better now that I have your assurance of his fidelity. I shall be glad to believe, when I think of you, that you have a friend, however humble, near you, on whose attachment and judgment you can rely. And be assured that——"

The assurance was lost to Prissy's ear; for as Harry was speaking the door opened and the latest subject of conversation appeared, candlestick in hand.

"If you don't mean to sit up all night, ladies——" he began.

"True, it is getting very late, I am afraid," said the younger sister.

Harry took the hint. He rose and bade his aunts good-night, raising their hands to his lips, with a kind of chivalric courtesy which well became him. And he noticed, as he did this, that Melly's hand was very cold. She smiled on him, however.

"So they have told you all about it, have they, Master Harry?" said William Crickett, as he attended on the guest to his chamber across the court-yard.

"They have."

"I thought so—ah!" said Mr. Crickett.

Harry met his aunts at the breakfast-table early on the following morning. They were calm and composed. In another hour he had bidden them farewell. The next day he was in London, commencing preparations for his voyage.

PUNCTUALITY.

PUNCTUALITY is a great virtue, the want of it a serious vice. Unpunctual people are often so provoking, however, jar so unpleasantly with the small details of domestic life, that we express ourselves about their failing with more irritation than severity. When a man keeps dinner waiting we cannot feel solemn, as at a grave delinquency: we are hungry, and vexed. The meat is overdone; the soup is burnt; the economy of the kitchen is disarranged: but when the delinquent comes smiling apologetically in, and you are fairly set down to the expected meal, you forgive him, in the fulness of your satisfaction; you are in a good humour soon, and let by-gones be by-gones. For all this, however, I protest against unpunctuality, as a grave, immoral offence; as one radically, essentially vicious; as one which affects far more than the ornamental or sumptuary fringe of society, which taints the very source and centre of all human well-being. It is hardly too much to say that an unpunctual man is an ungodly man: at least this is true in a very serious sense; his actions are not in keeping with the regularity of the Divine operations. Is there anything which strikes the dullest mind with quicker conviction of God's power? It may seem strange to him that astronomers can calculate the occurrence, say, of an eclipse; but there is a feeling even in his dull mind, that the actual punctuality of the eclipse is more marvellous still—that in the incalculable domes of space, the boundless, illimitable plains of air, a body, big as the earth, shall sweep along an untracked path with such minute accuracy, such sensitive abhorrence of deviation, as to come to a certain spot where the observation of men said it ought to come if it were what it professed to be, punctual to the very second. At the nick of expectation it is found not to have swerved, not to have lagged, not to have overshot itself; but though its speed and space are conceivable only to arithmetic, and not to common apprehension, so surely as two vulgar apples added to two vulgar apples make four apples, so surely the huge bulk of the globe fits the spot in space God promised it should fit, without the least aberration in position or time.

In many things we cannot yet trace the Divine law; but where it can be traced, where we can get the merest glimmerings and rational guesses at its workings, there we are impressed with the deep conviction of that Divine order that ought to carry to man the lesson of punctuality. This has created time. We make our almanacs in advance. We predict this and that—the length of the days and nights, the rising of the sun and moon, the tidal wave of the sea; for we know that the Great Master has arranged all these things.

And thus a man who can never be depended on to come at the right time, or to do as he has done before under similar circumstances, offers, in these respects, a remarkable contrast to Divine law, and that in a very grave and serious sense.

Do not let us treat this failing with lightness: it is the result of an evil habit of mind. We should pray for one who suffers from it, rather than laugh at him. We should both strive against it, and beseech God to deliver us from it, ourselves.

Were it universal, nothing could be carried on aright. Let us descend from the view of its moral aspect, and see how unpunctuality would affect the common course of life. You may judge of the value of a thing by supposing it universal. There are a great many foolish, unbecoming things which, even if universal, would not be fatal to the well-being of society. Suppose everybody left out his h's, and ate with his knife—suppose this an

unaspiring and fiercely dining world: it might be a very useful, pleasant one, for all that. Suppose nobody wore gloves; suppose all our chimneys smoked, and every one chewed tobacco: there still might remain a residuum of honesty and trustworthiness; you could depend on one man here and there. But if every one were unpunctual, no, not the most ingenious and elaborate concession of possible emergencies could ever realize the dislocation of society which would follow. No business could be conducted, no household managed, no school taught, no ship navigated, no train driven, no loom tended, no seed sown, no crop reaped, no market supplied, with anything like certainty or success. The use of clocks and watches would be destroyed; sunrise, noon, and sunset, would come to mean the whim of the observer. I do not know any failing which would produce more universal and disastrous effects. People laugh at an unpunctual man; they call him the late Mr. Blank, and so on. But this is poor wit. Unpunctuality would put the world into confusion, and set society beside itself. The unpunctual man would go to be married at a quarter past twelve; he would visit the patient when medical aid was too late; he would send for the engine when the house was burnt down; he would start or stop the train before the express had passed; he would back the engines after the collision; he would pay the bill when the execution had swept his house empty, and satisfy the executors of the creditor who was starved to death. He would sow late, when Nature had set out on her summer course, and could not go back to nourish his tardy seed; he would reap the corn before the grain was hardened by the sun, or after it had dropped from the husk to the ground; he would apologize after he had repaid the injury; and, though I don't know whether he might not be right in this last solitary case, agree to a compromise at the edge of a favourable verdict. Conceive, moreover, not one man unpunctual alone, but all; what crossings and perplexities, what futile arrangements and empty aims, what fruitless efforts and barren labour, would characterize the world of men! Mind would be bewildered and deceptive; matter alone could be relied upon; every one would disappoint his neighbour, and the only success obtained would arise from a combination of mistakes.

Even if some recusant should object to our judging his vice by supposing a universal application and practice of it, yet let him see the mischief he does by his individual unpunctuality. He keeps a whole household in uncomfortable suspense or chronic feverish irritation. Punctuality is like the close, workmanlike fitting of the stones of a building, which makes it stand; without this it is rickety and unsafe. The unpunctual man is not only the great provoker of ill-humour; he makes others suffer for his own indulgence: he endangers the reputation of the cook; he spoils the expectation of the audience; he confuses the moral rectitude of children.

On the other hand, a hearty punctual man insures a good hearing and welcome wherever he goes. He does business with an impression in his favour, and seldom feels the degradation of an apology; moreover, he is himself conscious of that which saves him the chief troubles of other people. Naturally punctual, he is not afraid of work; he knows that it will come in its right place, and can enjoy rest and holidays with an appetite another can only envy. He feels himself established in a habit which promises that this, that, and the other, will be done at its own time. He does not fret. He is not jostled or hurried in business, but can afford to do what he does thoroughly. His mornings are not spoilt by the remembrance of accumulated business; his evenings are

not abridged by a weary effort to overtake his mornings; he takes up his task with a fresh spirit, and when he is tired he lays it down with a welcome of rest and recreation which he knows will not be disturbed. He can work, and he can play; while the unpunctual man, he who is continually too early or too late, never can begin his labour or leave it off without some provoking interruption or twinge of regret.

ANOTHER SWISS ROUND.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE REGULAR SWISS ROUND."

VIII.—MACUGNAGA TO DEX.

Now the weather changed again. We had a spell of autumn summer before we got home; but here was a parenthesis of cloud and rain. Monte Rosa showed from foot to head in the moonlight, soon after we reached Macugnaga; but the next day, when we crossed the Moro Pass, it looked out only through openings in the clouds, and when we got to Saas the rain came down without a pause for a long twenty-four hours. But more of this presently.

Macugnaga is set in the midst of some wonderful scenery, which demands several hours' walk or ride to show its most striking features. The village looks as if it were at the bottom of everything, as all the views from it may be said to be upward; but in reality it is some 5000 feet above the level of the sea—*i.e.*, much above the top of Snowdon. Still, if any place is likely to make the nape of your neck ache from bending the head back and staring up, it is probably Macugnaga and its surroundings. The cliffs of Monte Rosa are tremendous. When seen from the Gornergrat, this mountain, with its approaches, except the last 500 feet of the top, is covered with snow. The view of it from the Macugnaga side is wholly different. You can hardly believe it to be the same place. At Zermatt you are behind the scenes. The front of the mountain looks towards Italy. It backs up against Switzerland, its shoulders being covered with snow, and its great stone face commanding the plains beyond Milan and challenging the distant Apennines. In many places the snow curls over the rock precipice, and makes a white cornice to the wall which bounds one part of the Macugnaga valley. We would gladly have spent some days here; but as our time was getting short, and our wives were all this while prisoners at the Bel Alp (where, by the way, they enjoyed themselves immensely), we made up our minds to go on to Saas the next day, by the Monte Moro.

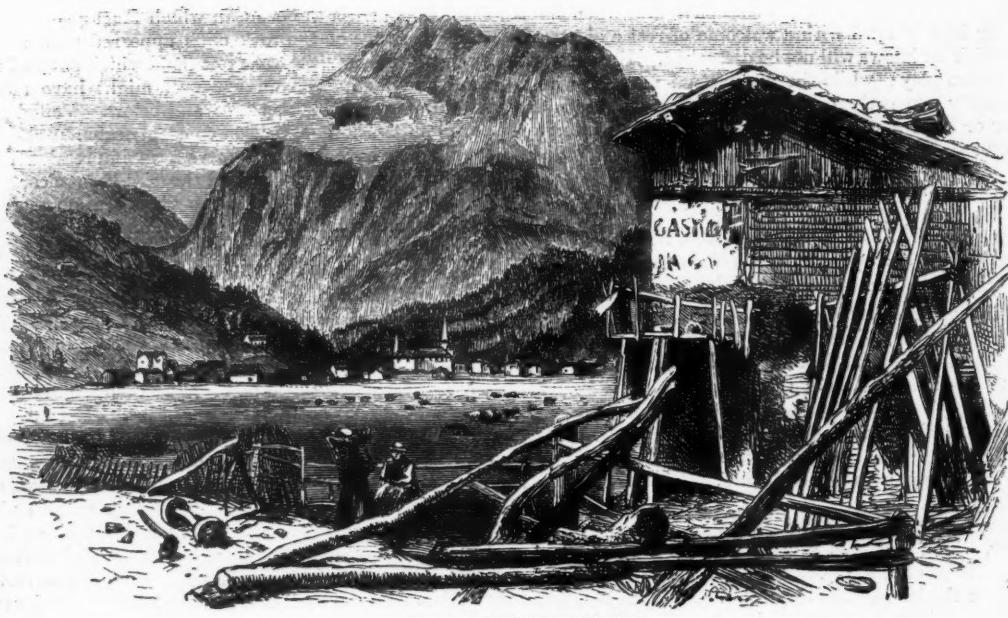
Having completed arrangements with a couple of porters to start early the next morning, we strolled about outside the little inn, by the door of which the landlord placed a candle, as if to illuminate our exercise-ground and show off the view. I think a solitary glim looks smaller and more impotent out of doors at night, when there are huge masses of black mountain scenery around, than it does in any other position. This showed a little dim-edged circle of light on the rough-cast inn wall, and an occasional moth hurrying itself to a brilliant but painful end.

We started at six the next morning for the Monte Moro Pass, the top of which we reached in five minutes under the three hours. This was quick walking; but we were in good trim, and mounted briskly. The path is steep, and in some few places involves a short scramble; but it is by no means difficult. The views behind, as you ascend, are magnificent. On a clear day I cannot imagine any much grander. On this occasion, however, the jealous clouds came down, and gave us only a few peeps at the

precipices of Monte Rosa, through openings in the mist. Seen thus across the basin in which Macugnaga lies, the solid structure of the rock cliffs appeared with marked strength, in contrast to the soft cloud which shut off their head and feet. The mighty wall might have reached beyond our sight, both above and below. Veiled grandeur tempts the imagination to exaggerate: perhaps we should not have received so vast an impression of the surroundings of the place had the sky been clear. As we approached the summit the view became more obscured, until we reached the snow, and passed into the body of a huge wet cloud, which capped the range over which we were passing. Close by the top we took shelter under some rocks, for the wind was keen, and, seating ourselves on a large stone which was clear of snow, pulled out our provender and made a hasty but hungry luncheon, or second breakfast. Then, with lightened knapsacks, we descended a short snow slope and changed our view for that of the valley of Saas. It is desolate in the extreme. The path lies over ruin—rubbish is too small and impertinent a word—from the mountains, and presents no difficulties except where the torrents are swelled by rain. We crossed one rather ticklish place, where the water rushed around the stones with so fierce a roar as to have whipped us off our legs if we had caught a slip. We met a lady and her husband, the former in crinoline, who were making a very toilsome business of the ascent. Hoops may be graceful in a drawing-room, but they make a wretched draggled show in a rough mountain pass on a wet day.

The valley of Saas is remarkable for the glaciers which stream down into it from the huge range of the Saas Grat, then on our left hand. Three of these show themselves at once; the two farthest, the Adler and the Alalein, seen in profile, present their clear white jagged outline in striking contrast to the dark mountains beyond. In places they are broken into great peaks and towers of ice, and one, the Alalein, thrusts itself so deep down into the valley as to dam the stream which descends it into a considerable lake, called the Mattmark See. It was some time, however, before we reached this, or even saw it; but the glaciers were plain enough.

Presently we came to the chalets of the Distel Alp. As they are built, roof and wall, of the stones around, and are very low, you may look down on the hamlet for some time without knowing that there is a hamlet at all. As there are some birds which build their nests upon the ground, and, to avoid detection, lay eggs like in colour to the soil, so these people of Distel have huts which you might pass in the twilight without notice. They looked to me like square blisters on the rock. Around and among them, defiling the fresh mountain air and staining the rain-streams, were heaps of manure, so absurdly disproportioned to the size of the place as to suggest the idea of a mountain dépôt for that unsavoury valuable. I have seldom seen a dirtier place; and yet the lungs of the natives managed to get a good supply of oxygen; for I think I never saw a more chubby, rosy-cheeked set among Alpine peasants than the few who inhabit these poor huts. But what a life! Their time must be spent mainly in saving manure and spreading it upon such pastures as they have. The whole population, apparently, was engaged in the last work as we passed. Our guides exchanged cheery greetings with some girls carrying large baskets on their backs, filled to overflowing with the commodity which characterizes the place, and shedding a wake of perfume which would have made a London inspector of nuisances feel at home. "Why," I thought or said to myself, "do they not contrive to fix their sleeping-places at some distance from this foul and filthy



THE VILLAGE AND VALLEY OF SAAS.

spot?" But no; here they work, and laugh, and rest; here they remain as a protest for the air of the valley, which can overcome many evil influences of such an atmosphere as its inhabitants create around themselves.

Passing the Distel Alp, we walked briskly on towards the Mattmark See, and were much struck here, as well as in the Val Anzasca, with the beautiful colours of the stones. Huge masses of a kind of serpentine showed their tints in contrast to red and brown rock fragments, some polished by ice or water, and some sharply broken, which lay around them. Besides these there were bright orange and green lichens; while the deep azure and brilliant white of the glaciers met the eye directly you looked up from the ground. I pocketed a number of scraps, which now imperfectly recall to me the abundant colouring which then surrounded us.

We held a short council about stopping outside the inn at the Mattmark See, but decided on continuing our walk to Saas, though the rain, which, having held off for awhile, now began to fall again heavily.

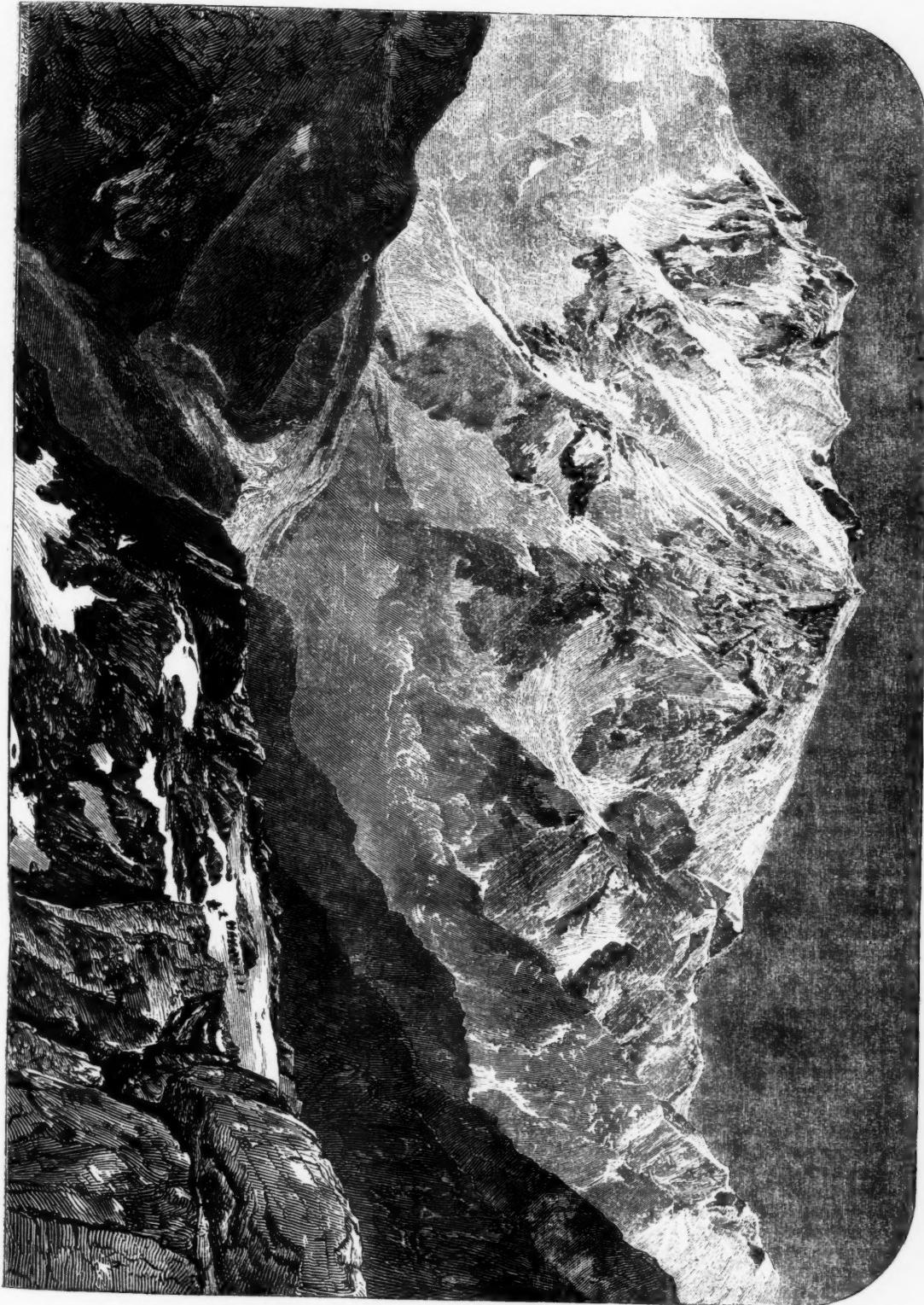
There is an ascent for some time at the foot of the lake over the terminal moraine at the Alalein glacier, under the ice of which the lake escapes. Its water is, or was then, very muddy, unlike the clear blue Marjalen See, which washes the cliffs of the great Aletsch glacier under the Aeggischorn.

We were much disappointed at the bad weather we met here, having hoped to ascend the Stralhorn, from which, being at the end of the Saas Grat, or range on our left, there is, they say, one of the grandest views in the whole Alps. We had to content ourselves with being shown the way we should have gone if the sky had been fine, and walked on to Saas, stopping two or three times to admire the great dam of ice which now lay behind us. Some way short of Saas there is a magnificent view up into the snows of the Mischaebelhorner. If an inn were built here, it would be popular, since from the village, a little lower down, this striking scene is lost.

We got into Saas in good time; but on ordering din-

ner we were requested to wait till a party who had announced their arrival had come in from Visp. We were never more pleased to see strangers, although our united numbers strained the larder almost past endurance. A famous traveller, well known in "Vacation Tourists," who had been to the inn, left as the sole record of his visit, in the travellers' book, "Try the ducks." They had survived till now, and were at this moment gobbling in the puddles outside, with much promise of life. But the hint was partially taken that day, and some of the ducks were doomed. There was a great lack of attendance here, which we seemed to understand as chronic the minute we entered the place. A gentleman happening to enter the *salle à manger* with myself, and finding the room dreary and cold, said, "I wish they would have a fire." "It's no use asking," I said. "How shall we light one?" he replied: "there is nothing but a heap of logs." So I looked about and suggested, "Burn the newspapers." No sooner had I hinted this, than he seized first and last editions, right and left, and, whipping out a lucifer, won the thanks of the house for a good blaze, which we took care to keep up with pieces split off the logs with our clasp-knives, and then with the logs themselves. The people of the inn made no remark on the disappearance of the journals, and we had a fire which would have roasted a sheep. We had a merry dinner—it was a scanty one—and all sat gladly round the hearth; for, though we soon afterwards found the weather far hotter than we liked, we were now at a considerable height, and more rain made the autumn evening cold.

Next morning the rain came down again, and we wearied ourselves in watching it from the inn door. The landlord was positive that it would continue: some guides and porters, who wanted a job, wet or dry, said that it would hold up. Thus is the "wish father to the thought." When noon came we determined to start as soon as ever there was a chance; meanwhile, the surviving ducks enjoyed life, and the landlord rejoiced; but at 2h. 55m. we set off. Hearing that it would take us some five hours to reach Visp, we started at such a



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pace that our porter cried out, and showed symptoms of striking work at once; so we distributed the heaviest of the baggage among the party, and, having thus lightened him of several pounds of excuse, kept up a swinging pace to Stalden, which is about five miles from Visp, and which we reached in two hours and twenty minutes, including halts. We were anxious to get over our walk soon, both because we wished to see the scenery, and didn't like the prospect of perhaps staggering over watercourses in the dusk. As it was, we were turned aside once or twice by the overflowing of the river, which flows, or rather rushes, down the Saas valley, and got into the town of Visp just at nightfall, walking on from thence to Brieg in the dark.

The scenery between Saas and Stalden is very beautiful; indeed, I much prefer it to that between Stalden and Zermatt, which we saw on a former Swiss Round. We passed through several very picturesque villages, perched on the sides of the mountain at commanding spots. One of them had apparently a face in every window. Something had touched the curiosity of the people, and, when we went through, they all, I will not say hurried out to look at us, but seemed rather to go in-doors to survey us from above. I never saw window-panes so luminous with eyes. When we got to Stalden, J—— and my brother walked slowly on, while I took the porter into the inn, for something to drink. He was rather done, and we thought a glass of the valley wine would set him up again. I like these quaint, rambling, country inns; but here, when the porter and I had had a small bottle of red wine mixed with water, I found I had only some gold in my purse, and they hadn't such a thing as change. Happily, I behought me of two small coins in an odd pocket, that would pass nowhere—not that they were base, but they belonged to another country. The people, however, took them good-humouredly enough—indeed, rather valued them for their speciality—and the porter and I gave chase to the other half of our party.

I should have noticed the swollen state of the river in the Saas Thal. The Visp here rose in many places to the very lip of its bank, occasionally even making a small puddle on our path, in which flakes of foam and small bits of wood took refuge from the roaring current. Here and there large rounded stones, such as show dry and hot throughout a summer, set up their backs sturdily in the middle of the torrent, and literally made the waters to stand on heap, the rush up and over the obstacle being in several places as big as a good-sized haycock.

It was dusk when we entered Visp, and changed our porter at the post inn of the town. The people wanted us to take on a carriage; but we were too hot, and refused to do so, otherwise we should have enjoyed the drive. This produced the only incivility we met with on our tour.

The people at Saas were poor managers; but they laughed, and seemed to think the shortcomings of their inn rather a joke. Indeed, at Visp alone was there malignant rudeness. I should say that we missed seeing the hamlet of Féé, which is above Saas; but we saw the scenery around it; and if you can imagine a little peninsula of green, squeezed up in the middle of a glacier, you can understand the speciality of the place. But I am sure it is well worth visiting, though the clouds prevented us from making an expedition there while we were at Saas.

But now we are at Brieg once more, and sitting at supper in the wonderful dining-room, reading notes from our wives (except J——, who is the last rose of summer), saying how well they were in the air of the Bel Alp,

and that they were coming down to join us the next day. The landlord of our inn also, who is rather like Napoleon, only the bridge of his nose turns in instead of out, told us that the ladies had been very comfortably lodged a day or two after we had left them.

We were rather puzzled as to their means for getting down the luggage, as we found they had ordered no baggage-horse, and we knew they had two portmanteaus and two carpet-bags, besides smaller articles. "Surely," we said, "they can never bring down all that baggage on manback;" and it was with some curiosity, as well as proper devotion, that we went next day a short distance up the path towards the Bel Alp to meet the cavalcade.

Spirit of Atlas! what beasts of burden these Swiss are. Keeping close behind the ladies, came first a smiling peasant, by no means conscious that he was doing what I thought a wonderful feat, but actually carrying on his shoulders the familiar, old, black leather portmanteau, with white stripes, which I have seen so many railway porters heave up with a grunt. This man of the mountain had carried it for three hours, much of the time down a rough, steep path. Another man followed. The two were loaded as if they had been employed from a cab to a railway platform, but by no means distressed: indeed, we found out that they had preferred this arrangement to the sending for a horse, and had been jealous lest any one should cut them out of the five francs each; for this was the price they proposed for the feat. I gave them a trifle extra, and I believe they would have carried me home if I had wished. I am anything but feeble myself at present, and yet I think I should have given way under that portmanteau within the half-hour.

Here we parted from my brother and his wife. They went up the Valais to Meyringen, while we set our faces downwards, and made for the head of the Lake of Geneva. We stayed at Brieg only a few hours after the ladies had joined us. J—— and I took places in the diligence for Sion, which we expected to reach between ten and eleven that night. There were so many passengers, however, that three or four "supplements," or extra carriages, had to be got ready. Ours was fitted to carry six—two in front, four inside, and two behind, these last sitting with their backs to the horses, as in the hind seat of a dog-cart, and therefore enjoying a retrospective review of the scenery and the rest of the train of supplements. First, of course, went the diligence proper, with much whipcord, bell-metal, and ejaculation; then came our vehicle, with its own share of noise, and more than its share of dust; then the train tailed off to something like a gig, almost invisible in the white powdery cloud which rose from the road we were all trotting upon. In the front of the carriage next ours there sat a shabby but kindly-faced priest. Indeed, as his driver kept his horse's head close at our heels, or rather toes, I could do nothing but look this priest full in the face till it grew dark. The sensation of continually looking away from somebody whose eye you can catch, is at first ludicrous, then irritating. I was in a good position, though, to notice the greetings which passed between this gentleman and the people we met. Every one saluted him. I think I must have sat opposite to one of the most respected men in the Valais; and yet, to look at, he was unimposing enough.

The valley of the Rhone is well traversed in the dark. It is monotonous and mangy. The sooner you leave it the better you are pleased. On this occasion, however, we were much delayed by the mischief done to the roads by the late floods. Every now and then the horses walked; and any one who knows to what a mere name

motion is reduced at such a pace by a diligence, will not wonder at our impatience of the road. At last, however, we came to a stand in Sion, our destination for the day.

A sleepy waiter laid out some supper in a deserted *salle à manger*, and a chamber-maid, with an extraordinary local turban, or structure, on her head, soon showed us our rooms, which looked out into a square court. There is not much to see at Sion, unless you except some castles which characterize the place. The mounds here, and elsewhere in the valley of the Rhone, must be a puzzle for geologists, unless they can account for them by the former presence of ice, which caused many irregular and steep deposits.

We left soon after breakfast, by the rail, for Bex. But there are several most beautiful lateral villages, the entrances to which we had driven by, and which are highly praised in the guide-books. We had once before come down that into which you descend from the Gemmi Pass. Mind you, I don't pretend to be a guide at all. While being careful to keep such topical information as I give accurate, I perpetually omit mention of places to which the guide-books devote pages. If you go to Switzerland, you will take "Murray," or the "Practical Guide," or "Bradshaw," or, best of all, I think, the new book brought out under the auspices of the Alpine Club. In these pages I am only a chattering tourist, going one of the regular rounds, and giving you such impressions as I get by the way.

When we arrived at Bex, which is a station on the great trunk down the valley, we found the village, or town, I suppose it should be called, some twenty minutes off, and an omnibus waiting to convey us there. No, we would walk. So the whole party, which then had turned out of the train, had their luggage piled on the diligence, and, seeing it start off, strolled quietly towards the town. One canny young lady alone, belonging to some fellow-travellers, got into the diligence, in order, as we supposed, to have the first pick of rooms. The great ugly vehicle had not gone far, along a sort of low causeway, or raised road, across a field, before it turned deliberately over, and flung the whole load of luggage clean away. But about the young lady. I jumped on the side of the concern, which lay with wheels in air, and hauled her up through a window, providentially neither cut nor bruised. Had we all gone by this conveyance, we should have had a horrible jumble, and probably met with mischief. How soon and unexpectedly an accident happens! Here might have been a man, safe from feats among the glaciers, down again on the flats, with guide dismissed and dangers over. He takes his seat on an omnibus, which, with the safest of slow cattle, jogs along at three miles an hour. Driver gapes, and flicks at a butterfly. Horses waddle clumsily along. All at once the fore-wheel goes into a ditch, and our mountaineer finds himself on the foot-path with his head under a trunk of family linen. We are cautious, and keep our wits alive, when we suspect danger; then we nod safely, and are in the midst of it. The explorer brings back his limbs whole from the desert and the iceberg, and then, perhaps, slips on a piece of orange-peel in Baker Street, and breaks his leg.

BOSTON CELEBRITIES.

THE city of Boston, the capital of the State of Massachusetts, which, in consequence of its narrow, tortuous streets, and red brick dwellings, presents many of the peculiar characteristics of an old English town, is often proudly styled "the Athens of America." This appelle-

lation, however, belongs more correctly to Cambridge, a distinct municipality, though in reality a suburb of Boston. In Cambridge is situated Harvard University, the oldest, most extensive, and best endowed seat of learning on the American continent; and in that town the professors of the University, as a matter of course, have their abodes.

The comparatively small and bleak sterile States of New England have undoubtedly been more prolific in men of literary and scientific note than any other section of the United States; and although the city of New York—the intellectual as well as the commercial emporium of the Northern States—possesses superior attractions to the restless, eager, and ambitious of every profession and class, many *littérateurs*, besides those connected with Harvard University, continue to reside in Boston and its vicinity.

A residence of three years in the neighbourhood of Boston afforded me an opportunity of forming the acquaintance of most, or I may say of all the professedly literary men of the city; and a more quiet and unpretending, friendly and hospitable class of men it would be difficult to find in any city of Europe. I have mentioned the resemblance that Boston bears to an English town, and I may add that in one respect at least the inhabitants of Boston resemble the English people in a greater degree than those of any other city in America: they are much more reserved in their dispositions and manners. In most other parts of the United States strangers cannot avoid remarking the facility with which *entrée* into society is obtained. Provided a man's outward appearance is respectable, he will find little difficulty in establishing himself on terms of intimacy, if he be so inclined, with the best families of the place. No questions will be asked relative to his antecedents, and his position will be determined by his present and future conduct and behaviour. But in Boston—among the wealthy and educated classes—letters of introduction are required from strangers, or at least the probation of a long residence must be undergone, before intimacy can be formed. To the stranger once admitted to the social circle upon a friendly footing, however, no people in the world are more kind and hospitable than the Bostonians.

In this respect my *début* was rendered comparatively easy; for I was the bearer of a letter of introduction from a mutual friend to Oliver Wendall Holmes, who received me with the utmost kindness and cordiality; and through his friendly exertions I was soon placed on a footing of intimacy with several of the most prominent literary men and merchants of the city. Among the former I may include Professor Lowell, the editor of the "Atlantic Monthly Magazine;" Mr. Longfellow; Professor Agassiz; Mr. Field, of the firm of Ticknor and Field, one of the oldest publishing firms in the United States; Mr. Nathaniel Hawthorne, who had just returned from his uncongenial post of American Consul to Liverpool; and Mr. Benjamin Shillaber, the originator of the American *Mrs. Malaprop*—"Mrs. Partington."

It is not my purpose in the present paper to attempt a critical review of the works of the authors whose names I have mentioned. I have not the space, even had I the inclination and ability, to undertake such a task. The writings of some of them, at least, are well known wherever the English language is read or spoken. I intend merely to speak of them as I found them at home, and give my readers some idea of the personnel and the social character of men whose writings have given pleasure and instruction to Englishmen as well as to their own countrymen.

Oliver Wendall Holmes, who is now about fifty-five years of age, was born in Boston, near the spot where he at present resides. His father was a physician, and he was educated for the same profession; but although he took the degree of M.D. at the Medical College in Boston, he does not, and, I believe, never did, practise as a physician, except occasionally in the families of a few intimate friends. He has held, however, for several years, the Professorship of Anatomy at the Medical College, and has the reputation of being one of the most skilful anatomists in the United States.

The kindly reception of a volume of juvenile and fugitive poems, which he published shortly after he quitted college, determined him, especially as he possessed some private means of his own, to follow the bent of his inclination, and adopt the profession of literature; and since that period he has been a constant contributor to American periodicals of the better class. He has also published several satirical and humorous poems, and a variety of prose works on medical and scientific, as well as on other less serious topics. Dr. Holmes—for by this title he is generally known in America—was one of the originators of the “Atlantic Monthly,” beyond question the most able magazine published in the United States, and since its publication he has been a regular and valued contributor to its pages. “The Autocrat of the Breakfast-table,” and the original and popular tale “Elsie Verner”—the works through which he is perhaps best known in England—were both originally published in the “Atlantic Monthly.” In fact, since the establishment of this periodical, the greater portion of his writings have made their first appearance before the public in its pages. Dr. Holmes is remarkably short in stature, slight, and almost boyish in form and appearance, notwithstanding his mature years. He is cheerful in disposition, sanguine in temperament, witty in speech—as his less serious writings would indicate—and very partial to active muscular exercise, particularly to rowing and sailing. The rear of his house, in Charles Street, Boston, faces the river Charles, which separates Boston from Cambridgeport, and the lawn slopes to the water’s edge, where a couple of pleasure-boats are housed; and there are few days in spring, summer, and autumn, on which the Doctor cannot be seen from the bridge, either pulling his wherry vigorously against the tide, or sailing down the stream before the wind; while, during the winter season, he is equally indefatigable in exercising his muscles in his skates on the ice.

From the first outbreak of the fratricidal conflict between the Northern and Southern States, Dr. Holmes has, as is natural enough, been a firm, unwavering partisan of the North. He has delivered several lectures, and written several papers in the “Atlantic Monthly,” strongly and ably advocating the righteousness of the Northern cause, and the necessity of maintaining the Union at any cost, and is the author of a great number of spirited patriotic odes and battle songs, which have become immensely popular in the Northern army.

The Doctor has a large family of sons and daughters; and shortly after the outbreak of the war his eldest son, a youth of nineteen years—Oliver Wendall—quitted Harvard College, with his parents’ permission, to join one of the newly raised regiments of Boston volunteers. He entered as a lieutenant in the 26th Massachusetts Regiment, and within a year was severely and dangerously wounded at the battle of Antietam. One of the latest papers written by Dr. Holmes for the “Atlantic Monthly” relates to this unfortunate occurrence, and describes in vivid and glowing language the anxious father’s search for the son, who, for aught he

knew, was already dead, amid the grim and ghastly relics on the deserted battle-field. The young lieutenant—who, by the way, has, I perceive from the perusal of the paper in question, attained to the rank of captain—was eventually found, to his father’s great joy and relief, still living, and he has since recovered, and probably ere now is again present at the seat of war.

The last occasion on which I saw Oliver Wendall Holmes was very soon after the capture of Fort Sumter, and before the intercourse was actually suspended between the Northern and Southern States. I had come to Boston from the South on a brief visit, and while crossing Cambridgeport Bridge I met the Doctor, who insisted upon my accompanying him to his house. Almost his last words, when we parted, were, “I hope you are with us?” alluding to the struggle between the two great sections of the country. “We want all you Englishmen and foreigners to be on the right side.”

“I hope, Doctor, I shall always be found on the right side,” was my reply, as I shook hands with him; but I did not think it necessary to specify which side I held to be the right one.

I was less intimate with Professor Lowell, though I know him personally, and am familiar with his writings. He is a much younger man than Dr. Holmes, and of fine personal appearance. Although he may be less known as an author in England than his elder townsmen, his essays and poems are highly esteemed by those who are familiar with them. He is an indefatigable worker, and, besides holding the Professorship of *Belles-lettres* at Harvard University, he is, as I have heretofore observed, the chief editor of, and a frequent contributor to the “Atlantic Monthly.”

Mr. or Professor Longfellow—for he also is a professor at Harvard—is so well known through his literary works, wherever English literature has penetrated, and his portraits are so familiar to the English literary world, that a description of his personal appearance is unnecessary. He is a handsome, portly man, with features that in his younger days must have been exceedingly prepossessing. By all who are personally intimate with him he is highly and deservedly esteemed; and perhaps it would be impossible to say anything more in his favour, than that he appears to the greatest advantage with his family and friends at home by his own fireside. To strangers he sometimes seems—but it is only in seeming—haughty and reserved; and this reserve on his part has led to the impression, on the minds of many people, that he is ill-natured and unsympathetic; though, in fact, nothing can be further removed from his character than these faults.

The terrible domestic calamity that almost prostrated him about two years ago—the loss of his wife, a most estimable lady, to whom he was devotedly attached, in consequence of her dress having taken fire while she was amusing her children by imprinting various devices on melted sealing-wax—has left an indelible impression upon him. Those who met him in the streets of Boston a few weeks after the accident, and who had known him intimately, scarcely recognised him. He seemed to have aged at least ten years during those few short weeks of mental suffering, and it is doubtful whether he will ever regain his former cheerfulness.

Professor Agassiz—yet another professor!—though a Frenchman by birth (I believe that he is a native of one of the French Swiss cantons), may be included in the list of Boston celebrities; for, like many other naturalized foreigners, he is as strongly American in feeling as the veriest New Englander who boasts descent from the Pilgrim Fathers who landed from the “Mayflower,” and

formed the earliest New England settlement on Plymouth Rock. Professor Agassiz, it is almost unnecessary to state, stands in the foremost rank of living naturalists. He literally dwells amid fossils and relics of antiquity, and living and preserved specimens of natural history, and may be found every day in one or other of the rooms of the Cambridge Museum, covered with dust, and busily occupied in arranging and classifying his beloved specimens.

Agassiz has devoted the rest of his life to the formation of this museum, which he fondly hopes, as I have frequently heard him say, will one day, though he cannot hope to live long enough to witness this desired consummation, rival the most famous museum of the Old World. A few years previous to the outbreak of the American war Professor Agassiz obtained, after much exertion and many disappointments, a grant of 50,000 dollars (£10,000) from the legislature of the State of Massachusetts, for the erection of a suitable building for a museum. He had already been largely assisted by donations and subscriptions from private sources, and had the promise of further aid; besides which, he had proved his earnestness of purpose by devoting a great portion of his own private means, and the profits of several of his literary works, to the object of his ambition. The building was immediately commenced, and, as soon as a sufficient portion was completed, the vast collection of specimens he had gathered together were arranged in suitable rooms, and the nucleus of a respectable public museum at once formed.

Professor Agassiz, who is married to an American lady, and has a family of children, might, had he been so disposed, have been a man of large fortune. But he is contented with little, and devotes all that he considers to be superfluous to the extension of his cherished museum. He resides at Cambridge, and adds to the moderate stipend he derives from his Professorship of Natural History by receiving a few pupils. The study of natural history, however, is not a very general object of ambition with American youth, and his classes are by no means numerously attended.

When Napoleon III assumed the reins of empire, he earnestly invited Agassiz to return to France, and, as an inducement, offered him a very large income if he would accept the post of President of the French Academy of Arts and Science, and a peerage of France besides. But the philosopher was not to be lured from his calm retirement in America; he promptly declined the tempting offer, and assured his Majesty that it was his fixed intention to remain in his adopted country for the rest of his life, and to devote himself to the establishment of a Natural History Society, and the formation of a museum, in New England. It is said that the offer was more than once renewed on the part of the Emperor, but without effect.

A gentleman of Boston, an intimate friend of Professor Agassiz, once expressed his wonder that a man of such abilities as he (Agassiz) possessed should remain contented with such a moderate income.

"I have enough," was Agassiz's reply. "I have not time to make money. Life is not sufficiently long to enable a man to get rich, and do his duty to his fellow-men at the same time."

Professor Agassiz is of middle height, stout, but not corpulent, and remarkably plain in his dress and manners. He may frequently be seen walking towards the Boston Aquarial Gardens, an institution in which he takes great interest, attired in a wide-awake hat, a long and somewhat shabby brown surtont, grey trousers, and boots often innocent of blacking, and sometimes with the dried

mud of the previous day still adhering to them. He speaks English fluently enough, but with a strong French accent; and though his lectures are always well attended, it is sometimes difficult to understand him clearly, unless one is seated near and in front of him, and can watch the play of his features. A stranger, on first seeing him, would take him to be some plain New England farmer on a visit to the city to dispose of his produce. There is nothing in the cast of his somewhat heavy features to impress one with the idea that one is in the presence of a man of superior intellect. The expression of his countenance is thoughtful and benevolent, and rather heavy than otherwise; but when he speaks his face lights up with earnest enthusiasm, and no one can be long in his society without being conscious of his superiority to ordinary men.

Mr. George Field is well known in America as a graceful writer. He is one of the corps of writers attached to the "Atlantic Monthly," which is the property of the firm of which he is the junior partner. Mr. Field is comparatively a young man, and is very popular among his literary *confrères*, by whom he is designated the "poet publisher."

Many years have elapsed since Nathaniel Hawthorne's name became a household word in England. Mr. Hawthorne had, however, long before he was known in this country, been a writer for American periodicals. The great mass of his countrymen were unable to understand his meaning, or to appreciate his style. The few who were able did not think it worth while to seek out an original American author. At that period, far more than at present, the American people seemed to be afraid to acknowledge and praise a writer whose ability had not been recognised in England. It is doubtful whether Irving or Cooper would have attained, at any rate at so early a period, to the popularity they achieved, had not they themselves published their works in England, and thus, as it were, through the recognition they obtained abroad, forced themselves upon the notice and appreciation of their countrymen. It may be doubted whether Hawthorne would have gained the celebrity which encouraged him to after-efforts of a similar description, had not the English critics been loud and almost unanimous in their eulogies of the excellencies of the "Scarlet Letter." The author has said of himself, that for a quarter of a century he was the least known and most neglected literary man in America. Yet, when he was past middle age, he collected and published in one volume many of his once neglected fugitive pieces, under the title of "Twice-told Tales," and they proved eminently successful and popular. Mr. Hawthorne was a native of Salem, Massachusetts, and resided near that city—famed in its early days for its persecution of witchcraft under the leadership of the noted Cotton Mather—has laid the foundation of several of his tales amidst the scenery of that locality, and has vividly depicted the stern, gloomy religious peculiarities of its early settlers and their immediate descendants. Mr. Hawthorne was a personal and intimate friend of ex-President Pierce, and on the election of that gentleman to the Presidency of the United States he wrote a "Life of General Franklin Pierce," a book that was altogether unworthy of his genius. Subsequently he was appointed to the post of United States Consul at Liverpool. In some respects a more unfit man for the post than Nathaniel Hawthorne could not have been selected. It was in the utmost degree uncongenial to his character and temperament, and such he acknowledged it to be. He was of a thoughtful, melancholy, retiring disposition, fond of solitude and books, and long, lonely walks in field, lane, and forest.

What the world calls business, of all kinds, was distasteful to him, and in Liverpool he was compelled to reside in the midst of a busy trading population; to meet daily, at the consular office, rude and rough seamen and busy merchants, who had little sympathy with his tastes and feelings. His habits and manners appeared so strange to those among whom he lived, that, as he confessed himself, the more ignorant people thought him insane when he would walk out, and frequently, as was his wont, commune aloud with his own thoughts. He, however, stuck to the office, and received the emoluments, until, in the ordinary course of American diplomacy, he was recalled on the election of President Buchanan, when he returned home, as it would appear, still suffering from the spleen; for he wrote a book upon his residence in England, which, though it is interesting in many respects, is both unjust and incorrect in others, and which, if it speaks truthfully of his own feelings, does not greatly redound to his credit.

Hawthorne, however, though admired and esteemed by those who knew him, was not a man who could have many intimate friends, since he held himself aloof from those who could not sympathize with his own peculiar notions. Still he was an honest, upright man, and one of the most original writers and thinkers of America. Since my return to England the melancholy news has been received of his sudden demise: he was found dead in his bed.

Mr. Benjamin Shillaber, one of the editors of the "Boston Saturday Gazette"—the oldest and the best literary journal of Boston—is rather a wit than a profound writer or thinker. He is, or is claimed by his countrymen to be, the original author of the sayings of "Mrs. Partington," of whose malapropian discourses there have been many inferior imitators. He is also the author of one or two books which have been successful in America; and on the occasion of anniversary meetings and other public convivial gatherings he is usually called upon to furnish an appropriate original ode or song. He is an excellent impromptu speaker, and possessed of a fund of harmless and kindly humour.

Mr. Shillaber is one of the few men who take the ups and downs of life easy, and are contented with a moderate share of this world's goods. Contentment and good humour are written on his open, benevolent features, and his stout, burly form. The last time I met him he was discoursing upon the subject of content; and he declared that he had not a wish for a higher or more pecuniarily satisfactory position than that he held. He had, he said, an employment that suited him, a comfortable, though not a luxurious home; he enjoyed good health himself, and his wife and children were in good health, and, he hoped and believed, as happy as they could expect to be in this world. He was content. I should have hesitated to believe most men had they thus expressed themselves, but I readily believed him.

Shortly after I took up my residence in Boston, Mr. Prescott, the blind historian, died suddenly. I met him sometimes at his publisher's, and was much pleased with his quiet, unassuming manner. Mr. Prescott was a wealthy man, independently of the large sums of money he made by his valuable historical works. He was generally esteemed in every part of the United States, as well as in Boston, and his somewhat premature and sudden decease was regarded as a public loss. Prescott was one of the few American authors whose literary labours were highly remunerated by the American publishers. The Harpers (brothers), of New York, a short period before his death, paid him 50,000 dollars (£10,000 sterling) for the copyright of his historical works, and

their publication, was transferred from Boston to New York.

I should have mentioned the fact, that among the more prominent literary men of America, "lecturing" is pursued as a profession. The American people are much fonder of attending the lecture-room than their Transatlantic cousins; and though itinerant lecturers, who are very numerous in the United States, are looked upon with suspicion, and often with contempt, known and established lecturers are highly remunerated. All the gentlemen whose names I have mentioned are busily occupied, during the greater portion of the winter, in delivering lectures at the literary and mechanics' institutes in the different towns and cities; and the ordinary emolument is 50 dollars (£10) a lecture, and expenses of travel, and frequently of hotel living, paid. Many receive much more than this. The Rev. Henry Ward Beecher was frequently engaged at 200 dollars a lecture, and all expenses paid. I have known Oliver Wendell Holmes to have so many engagements that he may be said to have lived, for the time being, carpet-bag in hand. He scarcely returned home from one distant town ere he was obliged to set out for another; and such was the case with many others. The winter lecture season is, or at least was, before the war, the harvest of the poorer *littérateurs* of America.

THE GIFT OF SLEEP.

In the east room of this year's Exhibition of the Royal Academy a small picture hung low attracted observers by its simplicity and suggestiveness of every-day domestic life. It represented a lady who had lain down on a sofa with her little child, and had thereby hushed it to sleep on her arm. The evening glow is in the casement; silence is almost painted; and the catalogue gives the name in a line from Tennyson—

"The mystery of folded sleep."

Gazing on this commonest of incidents thus gracefully idealized by the artist, another line of more transcendent poetry came to mind—

"So He giveth his beloved sleep."

How had we too often overlooked the fact, that sleep (in whatever sense the word be taken) is a gift from God, common as his sunlight and his air, and equally priceless in value! Like the rain falling on the evil and on the good, and the sunbeam on the just and on the unjust, the precious boon of sleep visits all beings: but there must be some special sense in which it is conferred upon those who are spoken of as beloved of God; somewhat as David was able to say, amid the turmoil of his escape from Absalom, "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety;" and afterwards to state, as an accomplished fact, the fulfilment of his trust, "I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the Lord sustained me." And in truth, who should sleep calmly as can the believer in Jesus? For "the eternal God is his refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." Nothing can occur permanently to injure him; he need have no unruly anxieties, unless through weakness of faith; for he is beloved of God, and to His beloved God giveth sleep in the fulness of the rest it implies.

Very beautifully has the greatest poetess of England paraphrased those beautiful words:—

"What would we give to our beloved?

The hero's heart, to be unmoved;

The poet's star-tuned harp, to sweep;

The senate's shout for patriot vows;

The monarch's crown to light the brows:

He giveth his beloved sleep.

THE GIFT OF SLEEP.

"O earth, so full of dreary noises!
O men, with wailing in your voices!
O delved gold, the wailers heap t
O strife, O curse, that o'er it fall!
God strikes a silence through you all,
And giveth his beloved sleep.
" His dews drop mutely on the hill;
His cloud above it saileth still,
Though on its slope men sow and reap:
More softly than the dew is shed,
Or cloud is floated overhead,
He giveth his beloved sleep."

Fulness of rest, proceeding from fulness of trust; because we know that the Lord is our keeper, and that he "shall neither slumber nor sleep."

"Almighty Power no weakness knows—
Unwearied Love asks no repose."

The consciousness of such a protector caused Philip Doddridge cheerfully to sing—

"Sleepless, well I know to rest
Lodged within my Father's breast:
What if death my sleep invade—
Should I be of death afraid?
While encircled by thine arm,
Death may strike, but cannot harm:
With thy heavenly presence blest,
Death is life, and labour rest.
Welcome sleep or death to me;
Still secure, for still with thee!"

A few words in a well-known book of family prayer, used every morning in thousands of English homesteads, always come to the writer with a force undiminished by repetition: "O merciful Father, how great is thy goodness in having given us refreshing rest, while so many were full of tossings to and fro to the dawning of the day!" Forth come memories of a certain sick chamber, and its dearly loved occupant, and of many weary nights while the sickness unto death was deepening; of earnest prayer and almost breathless watching for the balm of sleep to descend on those languid eyes and calm that painstricken frame. And God did "give his beloved sleep," though not in the way we longed for, but in that higher sense which is "sleep in Jesus."

Is it not true that our thankfulness is seldom called forth for this great blessing of sleep, simply because it is so common? We retire to rest, and as a matter of course, after a brief space of time, sleep comes to refresh us. We rise in the morning, for the most part invigorated by a perfect repose, and scarcely does the fact gain admittance to our dull souls, that such is the gift of God, and a very precious gift.

"Thy thousand sleeps our strength restore,
A thousand-fold to serve thee more."

writes Sir Francis Palgrave; and thus it ought to be. Surely recognition of the boon should be the first effort of the service. But a few wakeful hours will teach the lesson better than any homily that could be written. Then how we pine for—

"The body's rest, the quiet of the heart,
The travails' ease, the still night's crown,"

as old Dorset called sleep, when he lay without it, in Queen Elizabeth's reign. Though we cannot further agree with him that it is "of our life in earth the better part;" far better is the well-directed energy of the waking man. How noble was the reply of that pious Jansenist who was implored to take some rest from his unceasing spiritual labours—"Rest!" he answered: "have I not all eternity to rest in?" He knew that mortal life was the working-time, the seed-time of the everlasting harvest, and that sleep and rest were but a means, not an end, in our existence.

Further saith old Dorset of sleep—

"Rever of sight, and yet in whom we see
Things oft that tide, and oft that never be:
Without respect esteeming equally
King Croesus' pomp and Iru's poverty."

Yet generally it happens according to the wise man's declaration, "The sleep of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much: but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep." By far the larger proportion of wakeful nights are spent under the gilded ceilings of wealth, while the simple fare and healthful life of the cottager cause him an enviable repose. Then is the clown equal to the emperor, for Sleep is the greatest leveller save one—"his cousin Death." Then are the sickliest equal to the healthiest, the most careworn as free from anxiety as the most prosperous. God's equality thus descends upon all men for nearly half their lives; teaching them the ineffable brotherhood, the unity of weakness that binds all to his throne of power.

We have heard an earnest young Christian, who suffered very acutely from pain, and seldom for weeks together had a good night's rest, declare that he would not be without those wakeful hours for any easel sleep that could be given him in their stead. He had held such communion with his God and Saviour that the delights of his soul outbalanced the agonies of his body; great as these were, God's consolations abounded towards his necessities; he could comprehend in some dim measure how the martyrs died painful deaths in joy, for the sake of Jesus Christ.

Thus may our sleepless hours bring us a calm deeper than sleep, a joy higher than sense can furnish; and instead of being waste times, they may be laid out to the richest usury of spiritual advantage. So prays Bishop Ken—

"If in the night I sleepless lie,
My soul with heavenly thoughts supply."

Well might David the Psalmist declare rapturously—

"My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness;
And my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips:
When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches."

It was said of Stephen, dying, amid the storm of pitiless stones, a rude and cruel death, "He fell asleep." Much more of the tranquil death-beds of believers in our sheltered England may the like be said, in apostolic phrase. Our Redeemer has abolished death; henceforward it is only a sleep. The student of the New Testament remarks that the word "death" is almost always used in its secondary and adapted sense, as signifying spiritual destruction, and is scarce ever connected in any wise with the believer in Christ. "Whether we wake or sleep, we shall live together with him:" to call that "death" were a misnomer.

But sleep itself is also used in an adapted sense for a worse thing than natural death—for spiritual inertia and indifference. "Let us not sleep," says Paul, "as do others; but let us watch and be sober." Ah! to how many in this sense is it true that all their life has been but a sleep, from which death will be the awaking! How many lie in slumber amid eternal verities, wholly occupied with their own dreamland of shadows, while solid and real around them stand forth the immutable things of God unheeded! What is "conversion" but being awakened, while yet not too late, to the realities of the unseen world? The life of faith is the life of a man awakened from spiritual sleep or death. To the believer death is only that sleep in Jesus which signifies "absent from the body, present with the Lord." This is indeed the gift of God to those who have been bought by the blood of Jesus, and sanctified by his Spirit.

"Sleep soft, beloved, we sometimes say,
Yet have no power to charm away
Sad dreams that through the eyelids creep;
But never doleful dream again
Shall break the happy slumber, when
He giveth his beloved sleep."

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